



Crime Bulletin

Holiday Safety



With the holidays rapidly approaching, our thoughts turn to buying, giving and receiving gifts, visiting friends and family, and sharing delightful culinary experiences. However, there are others whose thoughts are occupied with unattended electronic/appliance filled houses or apartments, distracted shoppers with extra cash in a purse or wallet, or the next "con job" in the name of a Christmas charity.

Statistics show that crime usually increases during and after the holiday season and the reason is very simple. More people with more cash, gifts, gift cards, etc. are "out and about" which presents more opportunities for the criminal looking for an easy "score." Of course, the happy shopper is rushing around, stressed out, absent-mindedly looking for last-minute gifts, and trying to get everything done in preparation for the holidays and holiday festivities. The happy shopper is not thinking about the person in the store or parking lot that has followed you and knows exactly where you keep your cash, what gift you may have just purchased, or where you parked your car. Even though the routine and structure of work, school, appointments, and meetings have altered somewhat, now is especially the time to be mindful of personal safety, online safety, and to practice crime prevention measures.

Fire Safety

- Never place a fresh Christmas tree next to a heat source. Heat dries out trees and makes them easier to catch on fire.
- When buying an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant" or "Flame Retardant."
- Make sure that you are not over using extension cords! Do not link more than three sets of lights together.
- If using candles, make sure that they are in sturdy holders and never left unattended. Better yet – consider using flameless candles or candle warmers.

Shopping

- Park in well-lit and traveled areas. When returning to your vehicle, be aware of anyone acting suspiciously or loitering near your vehicle or in the parking lot.
- Carry only the cash you need. Use credit cards instead.
- If shopping online, use only websites that are secure (https). Stay away from public Wi-Fi if making online purchases.
- Don't advertise your purchases; keep them out of sight while shopping. If driving to several stores, lock your purchases and valuables in the trunk.

At home

- Avoid displaying your gifts through your living room window.
- After presents are opened, don't let your trash bins announce what you have received.
- If you are going away for the holidays, have someone check on your home (get mail, shovel, etc.)
- Be a good neighbor. Report any suspicious people in the neighborhood.